

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES, ANGEL STREET, BRIDGEND, ON MONDAY, 7 MARCH 2011 AT 10.00AM

Present: -

Councillor D Sage, Deputy Leader - Chairperson

Councillors

A E Davies
H J David
L C Morgan

Councillors

M E J Nott
J C Spanswick

Invitees:

Councillor N Clarke	Councillor R M James
Councillor C A Green	Councillor R D Jenkins
Councillor P A Hacking	Councillor M C Wilkins

Officers:

D MacGregor	- Assistant Chief Executive - Performance
H Hammond	- Policy and Performance Management Officer
P Williams	- Human Resources Business Partner
A Davies	- Children and Young People Partnership Manager
S Evans	- Corporate Training Manager
B Neville	- UNISON Representative
R Lewis	- Legal Officer
C Branford	- Democratic Services Officer - Committees

Invitees:

Alison Meredith-Jones	- Action for Children - Project Co-ordinator
Caryl Dyer	- Action for Children - Project Worker

97 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from the following Members:

Councillor P A Evans	- Work commitment
Councillor M Thomas	- Medical appointment

98 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

99 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS COMMITTEE MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 December 2010 were approved as a true and accurate record subject to the following amendments:

In minute number 92, paragraph 4 the words 'via an intercom' be inserted after the words 'visitors' book'.

In minute number 93, final paragraph, the words 'on 6 April 2011' be removed and replaced with 'in April 2011', and the following words be added, 'and implementation by April 2012'.

100 NOTES OF CORPORATE EQUALITIES MANAGEMENT GROUP

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Corporate Equalities Management Group held on 17 February 2011 be noted.

101 BRIDGEND YOUNG CARERS

The Chairperson introduced Alison Meredith-Jones and Caryl Dyer of Action for Children, and the Children and Young People Partnership Manager, BCBC who would be giving a presentation to the Committee on the Bridgend Young Carers Project.

The Action for Children representatives outlined the work of the Bridgend Young Carers Project, including aims and objectives, current service outcomes and feedback from young carers and their parents. The Project Co-ordinator advised that a copy of the presentation which had been given and a case study could be provided to all Committee Members.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives from Action for Children for coming along to the meeting to provide information about the Young Carers Project and the work it was doing in Bridgend.

Members thanked the Action for Children representatives for the work they were doing, and suggested that the work of young carers had not been widely known about until quite recently, and whilst it was important to recognise that they often did the same work as adult carers it should also be remembered that they were still children.

The Project Co-ordinator advised that one of their objectives was to give young carers an equal voice to adult carers by bringing the services together. It was also hoped that a Young Carers' Strategy could be developed as the need for one had been identified in the Carers' Strategy.

Members asked what agency was responsible for putting alternative care arrangements in place to cover times when young carers went on respite breaks.

The Project Co-ordinator explained that in the first instance the immediate family would be asked if they required additional support, and then informal care networks such as other family members would be explored. The 'Crossroads' organisation could be called on to provide care in these circumstances, and other services could be brought on board if necessary.

Members asked what the average waiting time was for young people to access the support from the project.

The Project Co-ordinator advised that young people on the waiting list were prioritised in respect of need. On average there was a wait of 2 - 3 months or longer from the point of referral to the point of assessment and accessing the project. The current waiting time was six months. The team attempted to undertake two assessments a month but this was difficult due to the limited number of staff.

Members asked if the team could provide information on the age range and demographic profile of the young people accessing the Project.

The Project Co-ordinator explained that the Project had provided a service to young people from right across the Borough from Evanstown to Porthcawl. The youngest person using the service was seven years old and the eldest was eighteen. The carers were divided into three groups based on their age range: 7 - 11, 12 - 15, 15 -18 and there were 14 in each group. There were many more young carers in the Borough who were not known to the service; however the Service had limited capacity and could only take on a maximum of 40 users.

Members asked if work was being done within schools to identify young carers.

The Project Co-ordinator explained that a copy of the assessment which was undertaken at the point of referral was given to the young person's school provided that they gave permission for this to happen. There was also an opportunity for the head teacher to discuss the issue with the Project Co-ordinator. Although good links had been developed with schools it would be helpful to have a school liaison link person to promote the project in schools and gain more information about which pupils were carers. The team had been surprised when they went into one school to discover how many of the pupils were undertaking a caring role for a family member.

The Project Worker advised that if the team promoted the project more widely, however, this would be problematic as the project did not have the capacity to deal with many more people wanting to access the service and there was already a six month wait.

Members were concerned about the levels of demand for the service which could not be met. Members also asked if there was integrated working between Directorates to co-ordinate respite services. They also expressed concern that young carers could not access the service quickly enough due to the lengthy waiting list, and suggested that demand was likely to increase due to the expanding population of the area.

The Children and Young People Partnership Manager advised that an integrated working model was being developed. She agreed that it was important for young peoples' voices to be heard and advised that a pilot project had been introduced in Cynffig Comprehensive School.

She added that it was important to share best practice across all the services involved such as the Youth Service, and to adopt a multi-agency approach to meeting the demand.

Members asked if there was evidence to show that respite trips had been beneficial to young carers.

The Project Co-ordinator advised that each recipient of the service was assessed at the point of closure in order to discover how many of the service outcomes had been met. There was also liaison with other services to allow young carers to continue experiences such as respite trips outside of the project.

The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance asked how the service prioritised the young carers on its waiting list and whether it was able to refer them onto other services if it could not respond quickly.

The Project Worker advised that each young person accessing the project was reviewed every six months and if the outcomes had been met a closure would be planned. There was a constant process of closing cases and opening new cases.

The Corporate Training Manager advised that she had linked in with adult carers to provide training on moving and handling and suggested that the same could be provided for young carers who had complained of experiencing back pain.

The Project Co-ordinator agreed that this would be helpful.

The Children and Young People Partnership Co-ordinator advised that where paragraph 4.3 of the report referred to funding from the Cymorth Programme, this should state for years 2011-12.

The Chairperson thanked the representatives of the Action for Children Organisation for their presentation and for answering the Committee's questions.

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Committee - Equalities noted the content of the report.

102 **PROPOSALS FOR THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME FOR THE CABINET COMMITTEE - EQUALITIES**

The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance introduced a report which proposed a Forward Work Programme for the Committee. He advised that the outline programme was flexible and if the Committee had an issue of particular concern it could be included in the items. He believed that the Committee had benefitted from the input of representatives from external organisations, and with Members agreement this would continue where appropriate.

Members agreed that they wished to continue to invite representatives of external organisations to the meetings and were happy that they could add additional items to the Forward Work Programme. Members asked that any acronyms in the Forward Work Programme be expanded and that job titles be used as well as Officers' names. Members suggested that the issue of young careers be explored again in the December meeting when there was an item planned on Support for Carers.

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Committee - Equalities approved the proposals for the Forward Work Programme.

103 STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN BRIDGEND EQUALITY FORUM AND THE NETWORK OF EQUALITIES GROUPS

The Chairperson introduced Darren Ralph, of the Valleys Regional Equality Council (VALREC).

The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance presented a report the purpose of which was to introduce the report of VALREC setting out ways of improving the opportunities for groups and individuals to engage with the Bridgend Equalities Forum. He advised the Committee that there were clear links between the aims of this project and the current work being undertaken to develop citizen engagement.

The VALREC representative thanked the Committee for inviting him to the meeting and explained that VALREC were seeking to forge stronger links between the Bridgend Equality Forum and the network of equality groups. Work was already underway to build one community in Bridgend rather than having separate communities for all the different interest groups. Bridgend Equality Forum (BEF) provided opportunities for networking and building best practice, and was composed of groups involved in services such as health, education and employment. The Community Cohesion Group was composed of members from other organisations such as VALREC, South Wales Police, Community Safety Partnership, and BCBC. One of its primary functions was to receive updates on instances of hate crime from South Wales Police. The Group was in the process of reviewing its terms of reference following work undertaken by the consultants GVA Grimley. The work included mapping current provision and developing proposals improve cohesion between communities within the County Borough.

A Visioning Workshop was held on 7 February 2011 at which priority issues were discussed. The main concerns which emerged from the workshop were: lack of opportunity for individuals to have their voices heard; mental health as a minority issue, and difficulties experienced by partially sighted people when accessing public transport. Another need identified was the improved availability of data to help progress the PREVENT (anti-terrorism) agenda. Communities which were better integrated were less likely to contain individuals who were susceptible to becoming radicalised. Radicalisation was not simply an issue for Muslim communities as there was also a problem with groups such as White Wolves and Combat 18 in some valley areas.

VALREC undertook casework to address and combat instances of discrimination or hate crimes, and worked to promote good relations within communities. The Voice in the Valleys project was an attempt to sustain strong lines of communication between voluntary sector organisations. The project was funded by 'The Big Lottery' and involved a mapping exercise covering all five County Boroughs to determine what groups currently existed, the establishment of a comprehensive database covering all the equality strands, the creation of a forum where people were able to learn about other equality strands and discuss any similar issues which they might face.

Whilst the BEF was effective there was a need for the Community Cohesion Group to have an opportunity to report back into the BEF on issues. Forum members needed to be aware of the work carried out by other groups in order to avoid duplication. The

draft Equalities Network Structure set out how the groups would connect to one another. The Voice in the Valleys project would be ready to launch in April/May 2011.

The Chairperson thanked the VALREC representative for his presentation.

In response to a question on funding arrangements, the VALREC representative explained that the project would be funded by the Big Lottery until the end of next year, and following this he envisaged that the work would be sustained by the Bridgend Equality Forum or BCBC.

Members suggested that the project needed to be self sustaining as it would be unfortunate if the work could not continue due to funding difficulties.

The VALREC representative advised that this was already being considered. There would not be significant financial implications to starting up the project as venues such as the Quaker Meeting House had been offered. The terms of reference had been drawn up and a Chairperson and Steering Group would be selected from among the group.

The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance advised that the VALREC project covered 5 local authority areas and that there were unlikely to be significant budget implications; the project would provide a perspective from hard to reach groups which was important for citizen engagement. If the project proved to be of value, BCBC could consider contributing resources to it.

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Committee - Equalities received the report and supported the proposal to establish a user forum as outlined therein.

104 EQUALITY TRAINING FOR BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH STAFF

The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance introduced a report the purpose of which was to provide the Committee with an update on equalities training for BCBC staff. He advised that the report had been requested by the Committee at its last meeting following a discussion with the Chair of Bridgend Visual Impairment Society who had not had a positive experience when visiting a BCBC facility.

An analysis of training activity was set out in the report and this revealed that several hundred staff had undertaken training. A training needs survey had been undertaken to identify which staff required training, and it was apparent that further training was needed in the Children and Communities Directorates. Much of the training was undertaken through e-learning so was more easily accessible for desk based workers.

Members noted that elected Member participation in training activities was limited to Welsh Language courses, and suggested that Members might benefit from undertaking training in other areas. Members also suggested that deaf and hearing impaired people may benefit from training in English as a second language as their first language was British Sign Language and they were not necessarily able to read English.

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The Assistant Chief Executive - Performance advised that the training of elected members on equalities issues could be included in Member Development programme.

Members expressed concern about the low numbers of staff from the Communities Directorate who had undertaken training on customer services and deaf equality, as these staff dealt with members of the public on a day to day basis.

The Corporate Training Manager indicated that she would follow up on this. She advised that equality training for staff was a fairly recent initiative and operated at present on an invitation and response basis. It was important that a comprehensive understanding of training needs was developed in the future and she envisaged that some aspects of training would be made mandatory.

RESOLVED: The Cabinet Committee - Equalities received and considered the progress report.

The meeting closed at 11.50am.